

Yamans

live as before for a night or for a few days. Clothing, ornaments, and household furnishings could scarcely be wanted or even noted. Weapons and implements in their very simplicity, which is striking, give evidence of much creative intelligence. Whoever a person is, he knows how to make and to obtain. In the matter of providing for his subsistence, everyone is on his own and the matter of his environment. Trade has not developed, and the fundamental equality of all persons has therefore prevented the rise of social stratification. One and the same justice applies to all. Everyone enjoys complete independence from others, which is why only the uniformity of customs and habits, language, and racial characteristics provides the center and inner bond that unites all the Yamans into an ethnic unity.

The Yamans way of life as we have outlined has without doubt contributed somewhat to the peculiar shape of their bodies. To what extent this is an advantage to them cannot be discussed here. Their small stature is all the more conspicuous since their neighbors, the Salikams, together with the Tehuelche on the mainland, have the tallest stature among all South American Indians. Our Yamans, however, are not only small, but in addition to this they are not very symmetrically developed (p. 114 /untranslated/). A broad, sturdy body with exceedingly strong musculature on the chest and arms rests on weak, thin legs. Excessive breadth is much more noticeable among the women than among the men, and among the former we come across plump figures much more often than among the latter. A total lack of simple grooming, generally coarse features, their perplexed facial expression, and unkempt hair complete the unimpressive picture of the Yamans Indians. Almost all European travelers, not without ample reason, have expressed thoroughly unfavorable judgments about the physique of our natives (p. 114 /untranslated/). Undoubtedly, however, they enjoy abundant health and have an unbelievable resistance which enables them to overcome all the hardships of their frosty home and has secured the undiminished continuance of their people for centuries. True, the Yamans will always be the loser in a contest with other racial groups for physical beauty, but the suitability of his body for the rigors of his way of life and the unfavorableness of his environment is unrivaled. In many respects he is well adapted to his home.

/420 cont./

[136] Europeans it has been replaced by a larger, gray one. Despite
[15] their unmistakably lesser degree of sensitivity, the Indians find
this vermin a torture. A mother will sympathetically pick lice
from her child, crushing them between her fingernails or teeth (97).

97. Hyades (q):348 briefly mentions
"the hunt for parasites (*Pediculi capitis*)
to which they devote themselves in their
moments of leisure" /translated from
French/.

No one minds having his neighbor restlessly scratch his head.
In the long, quiet intervals beside the evening fire in the hut
these sounds, produced by first one and then another of those
present, are a frequent /421/ interruption. The individual gets
no relief, however, in spite of all his scratching, and they hardly
ever lose patience throughout this torture.

[177] In the last decades the clothes louse (*Pediculus vestimentorum*)
has also spread throughout the region, introduced by Europeans.
The older people do not recall this pest; the general conditions
for its development were poor in any case. When a person re-
moves his clothing -- nowadays everyone wears only European
clothing -- the well-known traces of lice are revealed all over
his body. These people are constantly scratching their bodies.
I cannot say whether *Pediculus pubis* is present, but this species
also is probably not entirely absent.

• [142] The head hair of the Yamana is naturally black, stiff,
[302] and thick. Although it is liberally greased with blubber, dirt and
lice prevent it from ever being soft and attractively shiny. It
grows moderately long, and among women it reaches about to
their shoulders, which is why it does not lend itself to a particular
type of coiffure. Everyone wears his hair open and loose; it lies
on their head in thick strands. Some women cut the hair on their
forehead at their eyebrows (98). Occasionally, if a person does

98. Hyades (q):330 speaks of "hair cut
in front 'dog fashion'" /translated from
French/. Lothrop (b):194 expresses him-
self in more general terms.

/422 cont./

322 not want to be bothered with it, tie it a narrow strap, a tendon, or a few strips of rubber around his head to hold it. A man even uses his sling for this purpose. If women bend their heads, the hair falls forward and covers the whole face, but they never tire of pushing it aside. Bove (c):137 wrote: "Men and women wear very long hair that falls to their shoulders; only a few fasten it with a leather band. Most of them, however, let it grow so wild that both sexes look more like furies than human beings."

[42] The men like to shorten their hair. That is the only difference in the so-called hair style of the two sexes. They use a flat mussel shell, spread a small tuft of hair on it, and draw a sharp-edged shell over it in a sawing motion until the ends fall off. Then they take the next tuft, until they have done the whole head in this fashion. It cannot be helped that the hair-cutter grows tired; the other must endure much plucking and pulling, and the whole job is very irregular.

Modest grooming of the hair is not entirely lacking, however. Despard /422/ learned from an Indian that "only women use oil to make fine hair; then comb very smooth with porpoise jaw" (VP:VI, 16; 1836) /cited in English/. Both sexes alike regard the secondary body hair as ugly and in bad taste. For this reason men pluck their sparse beard hair, and all adults their underarm and pubic hair, with their fingernails or with two shells that fit one on top of the other. Older people become careless

[172] about this. In most recent times the men let their beards grow, in order to be like Europeans. Now one can easily see that they do not produce more than isolated hairs on the lip and chin (99).

99. In this connection Bove (c):126 says that "the men, besides being beardless, habitually pull out the little beard hair that they have, and the two sexes have no hair of any kind on the body" /translated from Spanish/. Lovisato (b):129 agrees. Fitz-Roy (a):175 had mentioned: "They would have a straggling beard, but scrupulously pull out every hair with tweezers made of mussel-shells" /cited in English/. According to Despard (VP:IV, 165; 1857)